

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA SEEKS US COMPANIES TO PARTICIPATE IN
AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT

1. AT HIS INVITATION I CALLED UPON FEDERAL AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER BERNARD MAFENI ON OCT 31. WITHOUT MINCING WORDS, COMMISSIONER STATED THAT NIGERIA FORESAW SERIOUS FUTURE FOOD SHORTAGE AND WISHED TO PREVENT THIS BY ACCELERATING NATIONWIDE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES CONCERNED WITH FOOD PRODUCTION MUST SIGNIFICANTLY EXPAND OUTPUT AND MINISTRY IS CONVINCED THAT PARTICIPATION OF FOREIGN FIRMS ESSENTIAL FOR ANY MEANINGFUL SUCCESS. SECTORS WOULD INCLUDE GRAINS, ROOT CROPS, DAIRY, LIVESTOCK, FISHERIES AND FOOD STORAGE. GOALS CITED IN THIRD NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (1975-80) WERE TO BE ACHIEVED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE BEFORE THE ORIGINAL 5-YEAR TARGET DATES.

2. MAFENI SPECIFICALLY ASKED THAT USG ASSIST THIS EFFORT BY SELECTING SEVERAL AMERICAN FIRMS IN EACH OF ABOVE CATEGORIES AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO CONTACT MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE THROUGH AMEMBASSY LAGOS. PRECISE ACTION PROGRAMS WERE BEING PREPARED BY PERTINENT DEPARTMENTS OF MINISTRY AND WERE DUE FOR COMPLETION BY END NOVEMBER 1975. WHILE COMMISSIONER SAID HE WAS MAKING SIMILAR INVITATIONS TO OTHER COUNTRIES, HIS ADMIRATION FOR AMERICAN EXPERTISE AND COMPETENCE IN AGRIBUSINESS FIELD WAS EVIDENT IN HIS REMARKS. HE ESPECIALLY PRAISED TIFFANY CORPORATION OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, FOR ITS ONGOING WORK IN MID-WESTERN STATE, A PROJECT WHICH CONSISTS OF CLEARING BRUSH,
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CULTIVATION, IRRIGATION, FERTILIZING AND PLANTING CROPS. LIKE

TIFFANY, INTERESTED FIRMS SHOULD BE READY TO MAKE "PACKAGE" PROPOSALS COVERING ALL ELEMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS.

3. PROJECTS ARE ENVISIONED FOR ALL 12 STATES WITH ACTIVITIES SHAPED TO CHARACTERISTICS OF REGION. CORN AND WHEAT CULTIVATION, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD TAKE PLACE IN NORTH-CENTRAL AND NORTH-WESTERN STATES, CATTLE RAISING COULD BE DEVELOPED IN NORTH-EASTERN STATE'S PLATEAU AREA, FISH PONDS AND SWAMP RICE CULTIVATION WOULD BE SUITABLE FOR THE SOUTHERN DELTA AREA. PLANS CALL FOR AT LEAST TWO LARGE ANIMAL FEED MILLS, AND A DAIRY COMPLEX WITH THE CONTRACTOR SUPPLYING THE NUCLEUS OF THE HERD STOCK. PROCESSING WILL GENERALLY BE LIMITED TO BASIC FACILITIES SO AS NOT TO ENCROACH UPON THE JURISDICTIONAL AUTHORITY OF MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIES. MAFENI, HOWEVER, FORSEES FORMATION OF AGRO-PROCESSING INDUSTRIALIZATION COMMITTEE, WITH PARTICIPATION OF BOTH INDUSTRIES AND AGRICULTURE MINISTRIES, RESULTING IN BROAD PROCESSING PLANT CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM.

4. WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT UNDER AEGIS OF FMG AND CONTRACTS WILL BE BETWEEN PRIVATE FOREIGN COMPANIES AND MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE. FIRMS, IF THEY WISH, CAN HAVE UP TO 20 PERCENT EQUITY INVESTMENT IN SPECIFIC PROJECTS. IN MAFENI'S VIEW, OWNERSHIP SHARES AND A "PERCENTAGE OF PROFITS" SHOULD OFFER GOOD MOTIVATION.

5. EMBASSY, INCLUDING RELEVANT STAFF OF AID AND AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE, PLANS SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH RESPONSIBLE MINISTRY OFFICIALS THROUGH NEXT FEW WEEKS AND WILL SUBMIT DETAILED INFORMATION AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE.
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